THE COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

defending First Amendment rights in the comics community

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volume 2
#2

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

BUSTED!©

Only You Can Prevent Censorship!

The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

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Busted! is a quarterly newsletter mailed directly to those interested in preserving First Amendment Rights. Our goal is to keep all interested individuals informed of current events and special exhibitions.

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A Word from the Director

It's been a busy six months since I joined the CBLDF as executive director. A new job means fresh challenges, and I've learned a lot both about comic books and the First Amendment. My most important lessons have come on the road, getting out to conventions, conferences, and retail stores across the country. I've had an opportunity to meet many of you and hear your thoughts about where comics are going, answer questions about the Fund, and—most importantly—listen to your ideas on how the CBLDF can do its job better.

And what is that job? To ensure that comic books are afforded the same First Amendment protection as books, films, or any other media. That means every comic, from the best-selling superhero monthly to the most obscure small press title. The rights of everyone—creators, publishers, retailers, and readers—come under fire whenever any comic comes under fire.

The comics community understands the dangers of censorship better than most. Despite the fact that most comics are purchased by adults, the general public still considers comic books little more than cheap, disposable juvenalia. This stigma makes comics a particularly attractive target for would-be censors, which is why so many of the incidents the CBLDF has been involved with hinge on what is "harmful to minors." That is the thin edge by which censors operate these days. And it's a lot easier to go after your local comic book shop for carrying crime-noir comics than it is to stop Mirimax from producing another *Pulp Fiction*.

While the business of comics has seen better times, the art of the comic book is alive and well. In fact, the medium itself has never been healthier. There has hardly been a more diverse and innovative era in comics, and it's that freedom to innovate that the CBLDF is here to protect.

Take a quick look through this issue of *Busted!*, and you'll see that the CBLDF draws its support from every part of the comics industry. You'll see mainstream and alternative artists working together with retailers and publishers and convention organizers, not to mention fans. And that's the real lesson I've been learning. Our community is an incredibly diverse one, but we're united by a belief in the expressive power of comics. Please join the CBLDF in working to ensure the future of this artform.

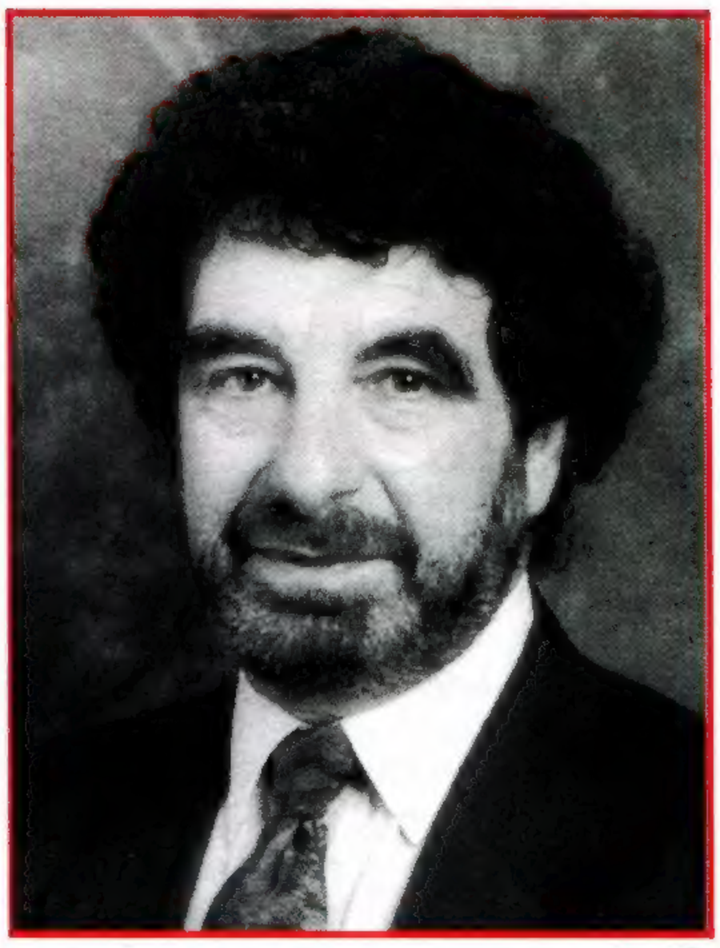
Chris Oarr came aboard as the new executive director of the CBLDF in March 1998. While his professional experience is primarily in development finance, he's best known in the comics community as the director of the Small Press Expo. SPX showcases alternative and self-published comics, and both the expo and the SPX Anthology Comic Book benefit the CBLDF.

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Comic Book Legal Defense Fund supporter ***Rick Mayhall****, who died in March after a two-year fight with cancer. Rick was a comic collector and amateur cartoonist who produced one panel strips for the amusement of his friends and family.*

Rick hated censorship almost as much as he loved comics, and he left instructions that contributions be made to the CBLDF in lieu of flowers. We are deeply honored that Rick chose to make this gesture. We'd like to thank Jeremy Shorr and all of Rick's friends at Titan Comics who made donations in his name.

SPOTLIGHT ON LEGAL COUNSEL

BURTON JOSEPH



If you work in comics and your First Amendment rights are under attack, Burton Joseph is your first and best line of defense. As legal counsel to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, Joseph stands ready to offer expert advice and legal support to comics professionals whenever their rights to free expression are compromised. And he's only a phone call away.

Joseph's interest in First Amendment issues was ignited in the late 1960's when he served as a volunteer for the historic defense of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*. "I got hooked," he admits. "I became a bleeding-heart, knee-jerk First Amendment lawyer. And I've never been sorry."

Since then, Joseph has tried some of the most important First Amendment cases of the past twenty years: *ABA v. Hudnut* (challenging the feminist pornography ordinance), *ABA v. Virginia* (challenging "harmful to minors" display laws), and *Playboy Entertainment Group v. Department of Justice*. He's also on the front lines of the struggle for free expression on the Internet, working as counsel for *ALA/ACLU v. Reno*.

Joseph is a founding member and former chairman of the Media Coalition, a First Amendment group whose membership includes the American Booksellers Association (ABA), the Motion Picture Association, the Magazine Publishers of America, and more than a dozen other media trade associations and foundations, including the CBLDF. He's also an active member of the ACLU and a founder of Chicago's Lawyers for the Creative Arts. In addition to his work for the CBLDF, Joseph serves as special counsel to Playboy Enterprises, Inc.

But despite his affiliation with these large media organizations, Joseph's sympathies remain staunchly with the underdog. "In the beginning of my career," he confesses, "every time somebody got screwed by a used car dealer, I would attack it like it was the most important constitutional case in the nation—much to my boss's dismay. But my view as an attorney has always been that justice must be done."

Joseph's involvement with the Fund goes back to its very founding. When an Illinois court found a Friendly Frank's retail store guilty of violating a harmful to minors statute, Joseph was called in to handle the appeal. Although he had read comics as a kid, researching the titles involved in the Friendly Frank's case opened his eyes to the possibilities of the medium. "I saw comics then in much the same way that we see rap lyrics today—cutting edge, anti-establishment, resolutely individualistic—and that appealed to me." Joseph won the appeal and the guilty verdict was reversed.

Joseph officially joined the CBLDF as legal counsel in 1994. When the Fund receives a request for assistance, Joseph acts immediately, working closely with the Fund's executive director to determine the facts. If the incident involves actual charges filed against a retailer or creator, Joseph considers the First Amendment implications and submits his opinion and recommendations to the CBLDF board of directors. If the board approves, he then works with the retailer, artist, or publisher to secure local counsel and fashion a defense.

More frequently, however, Joseph is able to diffuse incipient censorship incidents before any charges are filed. "When a law enforcement officer comes into a store and says 'I want you to move these comics and put them under the counter, and if it's not done when I come back, you're going to get cited,' there's no time or need to consult the board. When immediate action is required and it's well within our guidelines and precedent, I act under the authority given to me by the board."

That action usually takes the form of advising the retailer or creator about their constitutional rights, and with their consent, contacting the local prosecutor. Joseph sets forth the precedent in legal decisions and demonstrates that the creation or sale of the material in question is protected by the Constitution. "The local authorities," he adds, "expose themselves to substantial damages if they deny the First Amendment rights of either a potential patron, or a publisher or creator, or a retailer. Once they've familiarized themselves with the law, they tend to back off."

"There was an incident recently," Joseph recalls, "that's a good example: B & B Comics in Bemidji, Minnesota. The shop had a Frank Frazetta poster visible in the window and the city attorney came in and said 'look, we don't like that in our community, I've had a number of objections, you need to take it down.' The shop owner, Roy Booth, contacted the CBLDF immediately. We notified the city attorney that display of the poster was well within the owner's rights, and those rights would be vigorously defended. The attorney backed down quickly; he claimed he wasn't threatening anything, just making a suggestion. And that was the end of that."

The CBLDF is here as a service to the comics industry. If a retailer or creator has any doubt . . . they should call the CBLDF.

Joseph stresses that retailers should be promptly responsive to any suggestion of censorship, whether they originate with conservative community groups or come from official sources. "Like all booksellers," Joseph recommends, "comic retailers should familiarize themselves with the requirements of the local display laws. They need to understand what their rights are, where they should take a firm stand and where they might have to back down."

"It's easy for me to pontificate about the First Amendment," continues Joseph, "but the store owner has to do business in the community. I try to guide them in preventative positions. It's always in the retailer's best interest to take a firm, respectful, and conciliatory stance. But we never recommend the surrender of any substantial First Amendment rights. In the long run, I think these strategies work very well."

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CONVENTION REPORT

LOOK FOR THE CBLDF FIGHTING CENSORSHIP IN A TOWN NEAR YOU!

JULY 17-19
Wizard World, Chicago
Runecon, New Britain CT

AUGUST 2
Indycon, Indianapolis

AUGUST 13-16
Comic-Con International, San Diego

The mother of all conventions, **COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL** in **SAN DIEGO** is an industry-wide spectacle and historically the CBLDF's biggest fundraising event. This year we have some of the brightest lights in the comics community at our booth in support of the Fund, including **Will Eisner** (Thursday 2pm); **John Mueller** (Thursday noon); **Mark Waid** (Thursday and Friday 4pm); **Jeff Loeb, Tim Sale, and Richard Starkings** (Friday noon); **Eddie Campbell** (Friday 2pm); **Mark Schultz** (Saturday 10am); **Dan Clowes** (Saturday noon); **Scott Lobdell, Travis Charest, Richard Friend**, and **Alex Sinclair** (Saturday 2pm); **Gilbert** and **Jaime Hernandez** (Sunday 1pm). Come by our booth to meet these great creators and learn more about the CBLDF. You might also attend our presentation on **"The State of Censorship and Comics"** 11am Thursday in Room 16B at the convention center. And whatever else you have planned for the weekend, don't miss the **Fantagraphics/Last Gasp CBLDF Benefit Party** on Saturday night, directly behind the Clarion Hotel at 342 7th Ave. Not only do all proceeds benefit the Fund, but it's been the wildest, woolliest industry party six years running.

SEPTEMBER 2-6
Dragon Con, Atlanta

SEPTEMBER 19-20
Minnesota Comic Book Association's Fallcon, Minneapolis

SEPTEMBER 25-27
Small Press Expo, Bethesda MD
Mad Media V, Madison WI

OCTOBER 2-4
PACER Annual Trade Show, St. Louis
Fantacon, Albany

OCTOBER 10-11
Motor City Comicon, Deerborne MI
S.W. Michigan Comics Expo, Kalamazoo

OCTOBER 31- NOVEMEBER 1
Chicago Comicfest, Rosemont IL

DRAGON CON in **ATLANTA** will graciously host the **1998 Defender of Liberty Awards.** The Defender of Liberty Award is presented annually to an individual who has exhibited extraordinary leadership in raising awareness and support of comic books as an important artform deserving absolute freedom of expression under the First Amendment. Where better to present this award than the east coast's largest comic/sci-fi/pop culture event? And don't miss the **CBLDF Benefit Auction**, with an all-star lineup of celebrity auctioneers!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE SHOWS, CHECK THE CBLDF CONVENTION GUIDE AT www.cbldf.org, OR CALL US AT 1-800-99-CBLDF.

Comic conventions are the life-blood of the CBLDF. These unique gatherings are the only place where all aspects of the comics community come together—creators, retailers, publishers, and fans. They're the perfect forum for us to raise awareness of First Amendment issues affecting the entire industry. They're also great places to raise the funds necessary to continue defending free expression in the medium.

This year the Fund hit the convention trail with a vengeance as new executive director Chris Oarr earned his stripes on the road. His first stop was the **Alternative Press Expo** (February 21 & 22) in San Jose, CA. APE organizer Dan Vado and ComiCon International put on a splendid show. Funds were raised to the tune of $1400 thanks in large part to an impromptu art auction featuring original pieces by Pete Bagge, Eddie Campbell, Jeff Smith, and many more. Paul Pope also raffled off an original piece from his new comic *By the Balls* to help out.

Oarr only had to travel cross town for the **Northampton Comic-Con** (February 28 & March 1). With help from organizers Bob Mankus and Bill Fagelman, we went home $600 the better.

MegaCon in Orlando (March 13-15) was a mega-success, thanks to *Avengers* artist George Perez. Perez sketched at the booth for a superheroic 7 hour stretch. Fans flocked to the Fund on Sunday for the Mark Waid Trivia Challenge. Anything from the Silver Age to *Crisis* is fair game, and if you stump the expert, he donates to the Fund! Perez and Waid helped us bring in more than $2400.

The Fund went deep in the heart of Texas to **AggieCon** at Texas A&M University (March 26-9). Organized with military precision, the student-run show sported some stellar guests, including Garth Ennis and Joe Lansdale. With a great charity auction, we took home $1300.

That same weekend, the rest of the CBLDF staff journeyed to Long Island for **I-CON**, one of the east coast's largest sci-fi conventions. Board member Peter David signed at the booth, helping us raise more than $1400.

5-Con, another CBLDF home-town convention, took place at Smith College (April 3-5). 5-Con organized a special panel featuring Oarr and board members Susan Alston and Denis Kitchen. John Mueller and Eli Stone also dropped by the booth to do some signing and sketching. Altogether, the show raised almost $300.

After speaking on Saturday, Oarr spent Sunday at **ACME** (the Alternative Comics Mega-Event) in Delaware. Captain Blue Hen Comics, one of our strongest retail supporters, organized the show. Together with Wein's World, the Blue Hens put on an amazing auction that helped us raise $1,500.

The **Pittsburgh Comicon** (April 24-6) generated almost $2200. Organizers Michael and Renee George gathered together Paul Smith, Rob Prior, Rick Kozlowski, and others for a special QuickSketch benefit. Mark Waid reprised the Trivia Challenge, and also introduced a new idea: scripting original dialogue on the spot before an appreciative crowd of fans. Supporters went home with oversized word ballons filled to the brim with Waid-y goodness. George Perez was later heard to say "it's about time those writers pulled their weight!"

The **Motor City Comic Con** (May 15-17) in Novi, MI was the site of another success, bringing in $2700. Comics legend Will Eisner met fans and signed at our booth. And thanks to organizer Gary Bishop, part of the proceeds from the show's charity auction benefitted the Fund.

The **Ramapo High School** Comic Book Club held its 12th annual show that same weekend in Spring Valley, NY. Allan Rosenberg and Jay Horowitz organized a relaxed, intimate show that included some of comics' leading lights. Mark Schultz, sketching for fans and signing books, helped us raise $600.

The Fund attended two **Big Apple Comic Shows** in NYC, one in January and one in June. Brian Pulido and his Chaos! crew leant a helping hand, and between the two shows we raised $700.

Also in June, the CBLDF attended two events at **Another Universe.com** stores featuring board member Frank Miller, on hand to promote his new series *300*. The CBLDF coffers were enhanced by more than $1200 from these two signings alone.

Heroes Con in Charlotte, NC took place on July 4th weekend. With patriotism running high and Mark Waid and Ron Garney in attendance, the show's *Captain America* theme couldn't have been more fitting. Waid again went head to head with the fans in a Trivia Challenge, only to be stumped by a 12-year old with an encyclopedic knowledge of Waid's own *Kingdom Come*! It just helped prove that the more Waid forgets, the more money we make! A dinner with the Trilogy Tour II troupe resulted in an 18-foot paper-tablecloth jam piece from Jeff Smith, Charles Vess, Linda Medley, Mark Crilley, Stan Sakai, and Jill Thompson. With another impromptu art auction, liberty was upheld to the tune of $2500.

Unfortunately, the Fund can't spare the manpower to attend every show to which we're invited. Thankfully, we've had some wonderful volunteers step forward to represent us. Steve Snyder, president of Central City Comics, gets a huge belated thanks for his outstanding efforts for the Fund at the 18th Annual **Mid-Ohio-Con** in Columbus back in November. The Fund benefitted from the show's Charity Auction, helmed by John Byrne. Thanks to Steve and the generosity of con organizer Roger Price, the show brought in more than $4500.

Steve Harold and Tim Gagne represented the Fund at the first ever **Chicago Comic Fest** in January, raising more than $700. Kattbutt Comics helped us out at **Project A-Kon**, an anime festival in Texas which generated almost $1200.

Thanks again to all the show organizers and promoters who invited us to attend and donated booth space to the cause. For more detailed con reports, replete with wit and anecdotes, visit us on-line at **www.cbldf.org**.

REAL PROS

After five years as an independent event for industry professionals, **Pro/Con** is now part of the San Diego International Comic-Con. Pro/Con's board of directors, which included **Mike Friedrich, Peter David, Larry Marder, Noel Wolfman**, and **Bryan Uhlenbrock**, unanimously voted to donate the organization's remaining funds to the CBLDF. This generous contribution totaled nearly $8,000.

"The Fund has always impressed us with the work they've done on behalf of everyone in the industry," said Friedrich. "There was very little debate about who should benefit from Pro/Con's move to San Diego."

The Fund salutes Friedrich and the rest of the Pro/Con board and looks forward to participating in future Pro/Cons at its new home in San Diego.

Neil Gaiman Raises $15,000 To Fight Censorship

Neil Gaiman's **1998 Guardian Angel Tour** raised more than **$15,000** to support the CBLDF. Gaiman, the acclaimed author of DC's *Sandman*, gave dramatic readings from his short stories, including tales from his books *Angels and Visitations* and *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*. The readings also featured the premiere of new stories from Gaiman's upcoming book *Smoke and Mirrors*, due out in October from Avon.

The Guardian Angel Tours are part of Gaiman's continuing commitment to raise money and awareness for the CBLDF. To date, the tours have raised more than $60,000 to continue the on-going fight against censorship in comics.

"I come from a country where free speech is something you have to work for," said Gaiman. "I raise money for the CBLDF because I can. I really enjoy doing the Guardian Angel readings. Audiences have a great night out, and on the way they learn more than they ever wanted to know about free speech. I'm the sugar on the pill."

The 1998 Tour included stops in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. The tour was organized and coordinated by **Brian Hibbs**, owner of San Francisco's Comix Experience. The first show on the tour was aboard the Queen Mary in LA on February 12th. The reading raised more than $2,500 for the CBLDF. The show was sponsored by 21st Century Comics, and thanks go to store owner **Barry Short** for organizing the event.

1997 Defender of Liberty Award winner Neil Gaiman

Valentine's Day found Gaiman reading at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco. An excellent turn-out generated more than $7,200 for the Fund. This show was sponsored by Comix Experience and coordinated by Hibbs, who also introduced Gaiman at all three performances.

The final show on the West Coast Tour was in Seattle on February 15th, sponsored by Fantagraphics Books. Gaiman read to a packed house at the Crocodile Club, bringing in more than $5,700 for the CBLDF.

MATCH THIS!

This year's Guardian Angel Tour was the first in which corporate America had a front row seat. Christopher Cox and Elizabeth Bullwinkle, two employees of Adobe Systems, Inc. who attended the San Francisco stop on Neil Gaiman's 1998 tour, chose that occasion to donate a combined $450 to the CBLDF. They also remembered the Adobe Matching Gift program, which brought their total contribution up to $900.

Adobe is one of a growing number of corporations that encourage their employees' charity through matching programs.If you support the CBLDF, and your employer has a matching program, just let us know and we'll take care of the paperwork. It's a great way to increase your contribution and engage corporate America in the fight against censorship.

The evening featured an auction of original cartoon artwork which alone raised more than $1,500. Three dozen artists donated pieces for the auction, including **Jessica Abel**, **Mike Allred**, **Pete Bagge**, **Chester Brown**, **Dan Clowes**, **Roberta Gregory**, **Gilbert Hernandez**, **Jason Lutes**, **Pat Moriarity**, **Richard Sala**, **Adrian Tomine**, **Chris Ware**, and **Jim Woodring**. In addition to donating art for the auction, **Jeremy Eaton** designed and drew an original poster to help promote the event.

The evening also included sets by local bands **Del Lagunas**, **Critters Buggin'**, **Kombo Kraig**, **Peter Parker**, and **Miracle Babies**. All the musicians donated their talents to help make the show a success. The owners of the Croc, R.E.M.'s **Peter Buck** and his wife, **Stephanie Dorgan**, donated the performance space. With everyone contributing their time and resources, every penny raised went straight to the Fund. The Seattle show was the most financially successful of the tour stops, thanks to the promotional savvy of Fantagraphics' **Eric Reynolds**.

The Tour was made possible in part by generous support from White Wolf Publishing, DreamHaven Books, DC Comics, Adobe Systems, RK Graphics, radio station KFJC, and Diamond Comic Distributors.

"The First Amendment and the protection of our guaranteed rights is one of the noblest causes to fight for," Hibbs said. "We should all look to ourselves to see what aid we can give to the cause, no matter how small."

Gaiman fans can look forward to an East Coast Guardian Angel Tour planned for Spring 1999 with stops in Boston, New York, Washington-Baltimore, and New Orleans.

GUARDIAN PROTECTS FREE SPEECH

Steven Seagle, writer for Marvel's *Alpha Flight*, recently donated his $1,000 signing fee for a limited edition Guardian Action Figure to the CBLDF. This special variant figure of Alpha Flight's heroic leader is part of the Wizard Authentic Program. Each of the 500 collectible figures was signed by Seagle and is authenticated by *Wizard: The Comics Magazine*. Production of this special edition was coordinated by AnotherUniverse.com.

Seagle has been a consistent supporter of the Fund's efforts to fight censorship. "I've never been comfortable with the idea of being paid for my signature," he admitted. "But when the comics store I shop at, Shooting Star in Glendale, California, became the target of undue persecution, the CBLDF came to its defense. I decided then that I should find a way to support the Fund, and this became my way of contributing."

In addition to being the driving force behind Marvel's successful relaunch of *Alpha Flight*, Seagle is garnering acclaim for his work on *Uncanny X-Men*. He's also written *Sandman Mystery Theatre*, and is one of the creators of Vertigo's *House of Secrets*. He recently signed on to write the script for the feature film adaptation of *House of Secrets*.

"I want to applaud Mr. Seagle's generosity toward the CBLDF," said Steve Milo, president of AnotherUniverse.com. "We are all part of the same industry and it's a great honor for us to team up with top creators like Steven Seagle and a leading publication like *Wizard* to support such an important cause."

www.cbldf.org

ALL NEW, ALL DIFFERENT!

The new and improved CBLDF Web-Site is your source for comprehensive information about censhorship issues in comics. Completely redesigned by volunteer web-guru Eric Griffith, the site features up-to-the-minute convention news, case information, and many new on-line programs and events:

- **CONVENTION REPORTS:** Find out when the Fund will be in a town near you. We preview the upcoming cons, and review the ones we've been to. Our detailed reports will help you feel like you were at the con even if you couldn't be!

- **ON-LINE CATALOG:** features our complete line of donation premiums, including CBLDF T-shirts, comics, posters, prints, and a host of other cool stuff. We'll ship you whichever premium you select as our way of saying thanks for your donation.

- **WEB AUCTION:** This bi-monthly event features original artwork from some of the top names in the industry. **Frank Miller** contributed our piece for June, and **John Mueller** donated some fully-painted artwork for August. Look for **Rob Prior** in October, and more to come!

- **ARCHIVES:** (coming soon) An interactive time-line will put the whole history of comics censorship at your fingertips, from the 1890's to the present. Plus case files and a complete history of the CBLDF.

- **WEB-MASTERS:** Download our new banners: **"This site protected by the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund!"**

LET'S JUNK CENSORSHIP!

Looking to get rid of an old or even a broken-down car? The CBLDF can help. In fact, we can turn that bucket of bolts into valuable ammunition in the fight against censorship.

Just call Joff Enterprises at 1-877-CARS 4 US (227-7487) and ask for extention 1015. They'll send a tow truck to remove the car, sell it, and forward the funds to the CBLDF. Even a car that hasn't run in years has salvage value, and it costs you absolutely nothing to participate. All it takes from you is a phone call.

Looking Back on Spawn #10

When it debuted in 1992, *Spawn* took the modern superhero comic in exciting new directions, introducing readers to a new kind of hero. But the tenth issue of the series revealed a different kind of heroism: thanks to the extreme generosity of creators **Todd McFarlane** and **Dave Sim**, *Spawn* #10 became the catalyst for the single largest donation ever made to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. Were it not for this single comic, the CBLDF might not have weathered the storm of important but expensive cases in the mid-1990s.

Spawn #10 was part of a unique experiment on McFarlane's part. He'd proven himself an innovative penciler and storyteller on Marvel's *Spider-Man* before leaving to co-found Image Comics. From the start, he was one of the new company's most consistent and thoughtful creators. *Spawn*, written and penciled by McFarlane, was a huge hit and going strong. But in an effort to expand and deepen his work, McFarlane invited some of the best writers in comics to try their hand with the title for an issue apiece. The results were *Spawn* #8 by **Alan Moore**, *Spawn* #9 by **Neil Gaiman**, *Spawn* #11 by **Frank Miller**, and *Spawn* #10 by Dave Sim.

"Spawn was the vehicle," said McFarlane. "But Dave was the driver, and he won the race."

At the time, Sim had been self-publishing *Cerebus* for nearly fifteen years, writing every issue and sharing art duties with **Gerhard**. The book evolved from a *Conan*-parody featuring a talking aardvark into an epic meditation on life and art destined to fill three hundred issues.

"I count myself fortunate that I was able to participate with Todd on *Spawn*," said Sim. "It's one of the best-known pop culture phenomena to come out of the comic-book field. To be honest, I still don't know why Todd picked me, since I've never won any awards as a comic book writer or appeared on *Wizard*'s 'Top 10 Writers' list. But once Todd said that he was offering complete creative freedom, I was in. It was a fun few days, phoning Alan to find out what he was doing and getting him to drop a foreshadowing word balloon about 'the seventh level of hell' into his story and getting Neil to put in a dream balloon in his story."

"I had already decided to donate whatever Todd paid me to the CBLDF," continued Sim. "All of my previous contributions—in the hundreds of dollars—weren't likely to pay off the photocopying costs of a single case. I figured I would get somewhere between ten and twenty thousand dollars and that that would be enough to pay off one of the outstanding legal bills."

Instead, the donation turned out to be more than **$100,000**. In addition to paying off legal bills from past cases, the *Spawn* #10 donation acted as an endowment which allowed the Fund to grow into a mature and professional organization.

For the first time, the board of directors was able to hire a full-time executive director to oversee the Fund's daily operation and implement its agenda to raise awareness and additional funds.

"The donation permitted the CBLDF to move to a solid footing as an organization that it would be hard to picture it achieving in any other way," said Sim. "I had the good fortune to get paid more for a comic-book script than 99% of novelists have ever seen in the form of an advance. But there's no doubt that it was Todd's initial generosity which made my own possible."

McFarlane and Sim's generosity also served to dramatically increase the public's awareness of the CBLDF and its mission. *Spawn* and *Cerebus* both pushed the boundaries of what was possible in comics. In defending the First Amendment rights of creators and retailers, the Fund ensures that such innovative comics remain possible. And the Fund continues to receive money from *Spawn* #10. Recently, foreign license sales brought in an additional $400.

"*Spawn* was the vehicle," acknowledged McFarlane. "But Dave was the driver, and he won the race."

Dave Sim continues his support of the Fund with the Cerebus Third-Quarter Poster. Created to celebrate the three-quarter mark of *Cerebus*' epic 300-issue run, this limited edition poster is signed by Sim and Gerhard. All proceeds benefit the CBLDF. See next page for ordering information.

Burton Joseph *(continued from page 3)*

"The CBLDF is here as a service to the comics industry. If a retailer or creator has any doubt, or even if there is no doubt and he or she just wants some recommendations, they should call the CBLDF."

Joseph's wide-ranging experience in the battle to protect First Amendment rights gives him a unique perspective on the particular issues faced by the comics industry. "The fight we always have with comics is in part generational. People who remember *Archie* often don't realize that most comics today are purchased by adults. Parents and community leaders don't understand the nature of comics and the range of subjects they can talk about. But it's not unlike the fight over the 'Decency Standard' for NEA grants, or the fight over indecency on the Internet. It's one generation not quite understanding what is appropriate, what is art in the eyes of the next."

Joseph also sees these fights in the broader context of America's on-going culture wars. "The Christian Coalition and other conservative groups claim that all our problems are the result of declining moral values. Politicians pick this up and campaign on it, and of course the first thing that's attacked is reading habits, viewing habits, listening habits . . . Censorship is always looked upon as an easy answer to complex social problems. And it's easier to pass a law censoring comic books than it is to deal with poverty, sexism, racism, and abuse in our society. Too many people think that all we have to do is censor rap music and comic books, and put a V-chip in every television, and our other problems will cure themselves. To promote censorship as a quick fix for our social problems is ideologically absurd."

WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR SLEEVE WITH A CBLDF T-SHIRT!

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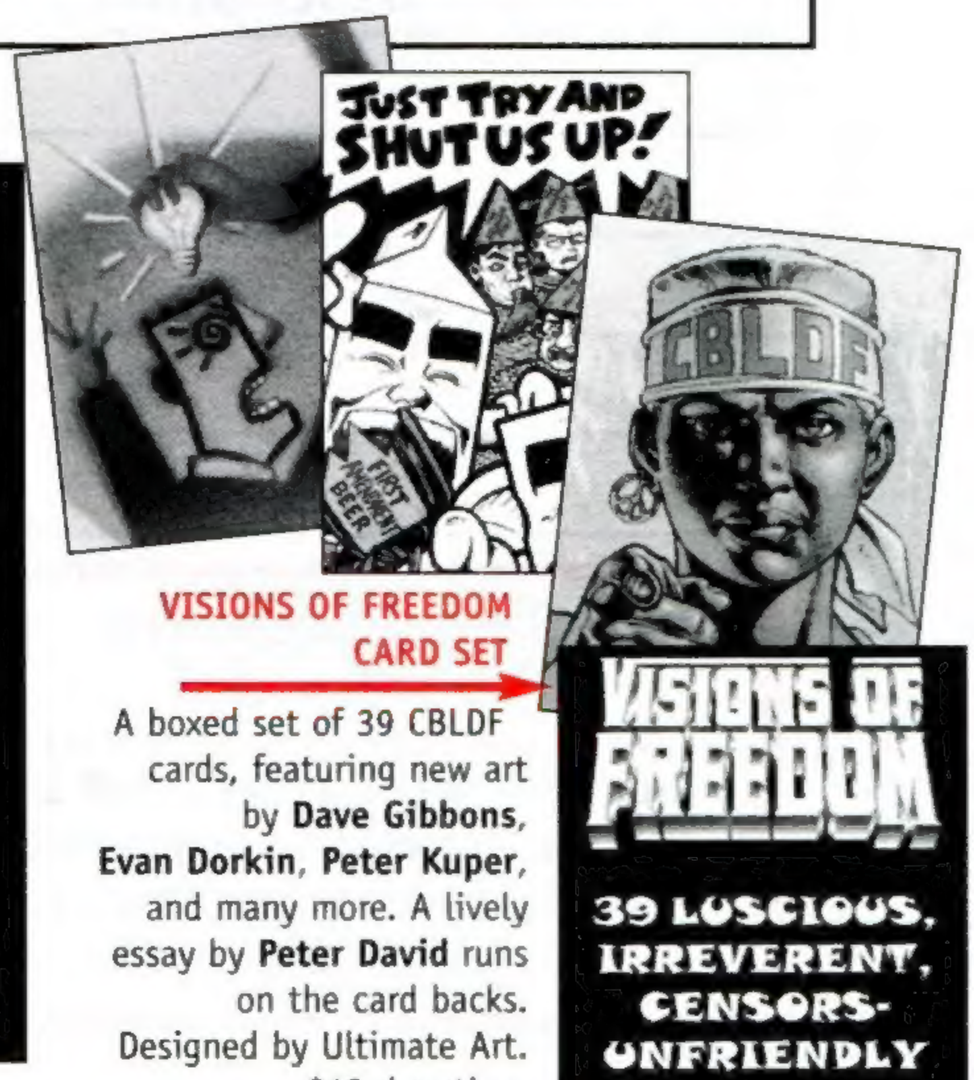

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